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the questions at issue, their impartial treatment, and his ingenious interpretations. Even though one may differ on important points, the book is a contribution of real worth, a work of distinction.

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RECENT TREATISES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

In the matter of the New Testament canon, works in English have been few and incomplete. No thoroughgoing treatise has been undertaken since Bishop Westcott's *Survey*, written more than fifty years ago, and since often amplified and republished. The point of view and not a few important historical positions there taken however, have become antiquated, and despite its invaluable collection of materials the book has been used with increasing dissatisfaction. Moreover Bishop Westcott's book, at its best estate, can never have been interesting; indeed it is doubtful if the bishop would have ventured to write as freely, informally, and entertainingly as does Professor Gregory,¹ even had he been able to do so.

Professor Gregory's work on the canon arrests and holds the reader's interest beyond any book ever written on the subject. It is not a work of reference, full of citations of current literature and strewn with the lumber of scholarship; but a book to read and to enjoy. Its pages possess a quality of vivid interest, even fascination, very rarely attained by works of like solid scholarship. With the rapid and vigorous movement of Professor Gregory's conversational style, we are carried pleasantly forward through the scenes and among the figures of early Christian history, which are made to live again before us. Our author has in a pre-eminent degree vital human sympathy, and an informal and original manner of presentation, familiar to all who have sat under his teaching. These will in these pages renew their delightful experience of his instruction, and their enthusiastic recognition of his skill and power as a teacher. It is cause for congratulation that we have at length in English an adequate treatment of the New Testament canon so sound in scholarship and so attractive in form.

It is perhaps ungracious to regret that the very strength and charm of Professor Gregory's book carry with them certain weaknesses. For a classroom manual, we should have welcomed clearer definition as to the critical points in the history of the canon, and fuller information as to the most recent treatises and discussions of them. It is certainly well that the book has not been confused and burdened with such materials, but the total

¹ *Canon and Text of the New Testament*. By Caspar René Gregory. (International Theological Library.) New York: Scribners, 1907. vii + 539 pages. \$2.50.

absence of them simply forces us to seek them elsewhere. One of these vital points concerns the genesis of the canonizing motive; how comes it that a community under the guidance of the spirit should at a certain point in its history have substituted the guidance of the letter? Had the heretics something to do with it, as Harnack would have us believe? Did the New Testament canon emerge silently and simultaneously, in all parts of the world, from the collective consciousness of the churches, or did it originate in one place and thence spread, under powerful ecclesiastical influence? And if the latter be the case, what was the place of its origin? The study of the rise of the canon seems to many to be the study of a series of problems, such as these, and to be most helped by clear statement of the successive problems and definite direction to the best solutions of them. Professor Gregory has conceived his task quite differently. In some details, the positions taken require qualification. Certainly 117 A. D. is much too early for the earlier part of Diognetus, and thirty years later is still much too early for its closing chapters. We must suppose a slip here (p. 73). The old view of the second-century origin of the Peshitto shows itself on p. 156, although it is advanced with all diffidence. But we cannot escape the conviction that that position, however diffidently advanced, is likely to produce serious misconception in the history of the rise of the canon. If the canon did not exist in Syria in A. D. 170—and that it did seems to be pure assumption—it is a fact of decisive importance, for all the other second-century witnesses to it can be directly connected with Rome. But if the framing of the canon can be traced to Rome, and be shown to have spread thence throughout the world, that action can be understood only in connection with the founding of the Catholic church, of which great enterprise it formed an integral part.

As an authority upon the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, Professor Gregory is acknowledged pre-eminent. His *Prolegomena* in Latin and his *Textkritik* in German are the standard and indispensable works of reference in this field. The part of the present work dealing with the New Testament text is no mere English counterpart of these. It is a continuous account of ancient writing materials, the ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, the various versions of it, the editions of it, the history of the text, and the detailed discussion of various passages. To this part of his work, Professor Gregory's wide and direct acquaintance with the scenes, the men, and the books dealt with contributes extraordinary elements of interest and value. The account of the manuscripts is summary and popular, and presents what is most interesting as well as what is most important about each. In the sketch of textual history Professor Gregory

professes himself a follower of Westcott and Hort, of whom he says, that they "did more than anyone else ever did to place the history of the text of the New Testament upon a sound basis" (p. 463). His discussion of the printed text and its editors, from Stunica and Erasmus to Nestle and Von Soden, is frank, keen, and intelligent. His effort to group cursive manuscripts according to scribes or schools of writing is especially helpful and promising. In his acceptance of Westcott and Hort's view that the Peshitto reflects the Syrian revision, arrested after its first stage, Professor Gregory seems oblivious of the powerful arguments recently advanced, notably by Burkitt, for the fifth-century date of the Peshitto, a finding which demands a modification, and perhaps a serious one, in Dr. Hort's brilliant theory. It is hard to realize, as we close this learned and delightful volume, that within six weeks of its appearance textual students have learned of a new uncial manuscript of the gospels and another of the Pauline epistles, recently brought to America and now awaiting critical examination, which promise to take rank among our most important and ancient textual witnesses. Truly the age of wonders is not past.

Mr. Ferris sketches the rise of the New Testament canon with bold and telling strokes.² He thinks the existence of a New Testament canon no matter of course, like a river, which has only to be calmly traced from its sources to its mouth, but rather like some rocky cliff, thrust up by an internal convulsion, the nature and occasion of which have to be investigated. The early church, relying upon the spirit's guidance, had no immediate need for a closed canon of scripture, but when the speculations of the heretics and the eccentricities and even excesses of Christians claiming the old prophetic gifts, began to produce confusion in Christian thought, Christian bishops, especially at Rome, where the regulative disposition seems always to have prevailed, found a means of correcting this confusion in a closed canon of authoritative scripture. The author thus relates himself, in his view of the rise of the canon to Professor Harnack, whose illuminating interpretation of this history has certainly never been surpassed. Mr. Ferris has clothed a well-known position in a clear, vigorous, and trenchant form, and his work is a welcome addition to the current, if not to the permanent, literature of the subject. His attention to the character and fortunes of those early Christian books which did not find their way into the canon is especially well bestowed, since what books were left out is of hardly less importance to the understanding of the process and its motive, than what books were taken in. Rome is the focal point in the process with Mr.

² *The Formation of the New Testament*. By George Hooper Ferris. Philadelphia: Griffith & Rowland Press, 1907. 281 pages. \$0.90 net.

Ferris, and we must believe that he is right. Indeed, in spirit and in execution this is a strong study of the thought and life of the churches of the first two centuries. Some statements are perhaps a little overdrawn, for example, that "the Shepherd of Hermas was probably more widely read and admired than any book now in our New Testament" (p. 17). And it is hardly true that Irenaeus "prided himself on the fact that in his very early years he had been a pupil of Polycarp" (p. 182). There are some misprinted names on pp. 53, 248, 274.

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Professor Leipoldt of Halle-Wittenberg publishes in the book under review³ the first volume (*die Entstehung*) of his history of the canon of the New Testament. The second volume, dealing with the completed canon in the church, is promised within a twelvemonth. The work is characterized throughout by the infinitely painstaking and exhaustive research of the German scholar. The wealth of source material in the notes is almost bewildering. The author has taken up into his work the immense labors of Credner, Lipsius, Zahn, and Harnack on the canon, and has brought to bear on the theories of these scholars a criticism at once fresh and convincing. His own remarkable work in the field of early Egyptian and Syrian Christianity has fitted him to make new contributions of great importance to the history of the canon in the Alexandrian and Syrian communities.

After a short section showing the attitude of the early Christians toward the Old Testament and the significance for the formation of the canon of the New Testament of such a dogma as verbal inspiration and its corollary, allegorical exegesis, the author proceeds to treat the early Christian literature out of which the New Testament was formed under three heads: Apocalypses, Gospels, Apostolic Letters and Acts. Each of these three topics is treated again in a threefold scheme dealing with the authority underlying the type of literature considered (first age), the way in which that literature became Holy Scripture (second age), and the determination of the exact bounds of that literature in the canon (third age). For example, under the Apocalypses, first we have a study of the authority of the Prophets in the early church, then the story of how the written and ancient prophecies came to be regarded as Scripture in the anti-Montanistic struggle, and finally the circumstances which limited the apocalyptic literature that found final acceptance in the church at large to the Revelation of St. John.

Among the many excellent qualities of Dr. Leipoldt's work—its scholar-

³ *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*. Erster Teil: Die Entstehung. By Johannes Leipoldt, Ph.D. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1907. vi + 288 pages. M. 3.60.

ship, its pleasing style, its appreciation of individuality in the early fathers, its constant insistence on a psychological factor in the determination of ancient dogmas—we would point especially to a certain saneness and largeness of view, too seldom met with in historians of much controverted questions. There is no thesis to be defended in this book. Inexorable logic does not frighten the author into sacrifices of material or method for conformity's sake. He tells us plainly that men who are in the midst of a development themselves cannot see it with the definiteness of perspective of those who live centuries later. So an Irenaeus can be both mistaken and sincere when he refers the authoritative episcopate, which he was himself helping to develop, to the age of the Apostles. Dr. Leipoldt's largeness of view also shows itself in his refusal to see in any single formula, such as a process of weeding, or a process of combination, or a product of the strife with Montanists and Gnostics, the key to the formation of the canon of the New Testament.

Despite the relief of an excellent style the book suffers somewhat from the ponderousness of its learning, and gives the reader the unpleasant sensation of being unduly solicitous to record every testimony, grave or slight. The sense of overburdening is still further encouraged by a great number of *Zusätze* in fine print, in many of which it is impossible to discover the reason for a different size of type from that of the main text. But the only serious adverse criticism to which the book seems to us to be obnoxious is the position taken by Dr. Leipoldt in his *Rückblick* on the significance of the canon as Holy Scripture. In full and reiterated agreement with Luther's definition of Scripture as, "Was Christum treibt," Dr. Leipoldt still finds our actual, and in many parts amply proven accidental, canon of the New Testament providentially complete and exclusive; and after brilliantly proving, in the historical-critical part of his work, the composite character and unequal value of the books making up the New Testament canon, he speaks of the whole collection as a *single* piece of edifying literature with which no other can compare ("Es gibt keine Schrift . . . die sich an . . . erbaulicher Bedeutung mit dem N. T. messen könnte," p. 269); and he further congratulates the church on getting rid of the Barnabas Letter (which he calls "*sehr lehrreich*"), on the ground that "Schwierigkeiten ohne Zahl hätten sich an seine Fersen gehaftet!" As if the "canonical" Letters to Timothy and the Ephesians could show clean heels to all *Schwierigkeiten*! That the highly prized Epistle of Barnabas was rejected while the trivial Epistle to Philemon was kept certainly has another reason than the application of Luther's canon of criticism.

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